

'Kooks,' not CIA, viewed as peril

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The greatest threat to American civil liberties is not the Central Intelligence Agency, but radical groups operating within the United States, a former CIA deputy director said yesterday.

"It's the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), the Weathermen, the nuts and kooks and their friends and allies who threaten American freedom," said Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, who resigned as deputy director of the CIA in July.

Walters, who served four years in the CIA and more than 30 years in military intelligence, spoke to a meeting of the Navy League and the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii at the Sheraton-Waikiki Hotel.

Despite widespread publicity about abuses by the CIA, no CIA employee has ever been indicted for or

convicted of misconduct, Walters said.

"We've had 76,000 employees since we were founded in 1947. I can't say we didn't have any kooks, nuts, people who have used bad judgment. Yes, we have some kooks. But with all this 'misconduct,' no one has been indicted," he said.

Yes, he said, there were break-ins and telephone taps—but involving only CIA people. Walters said the popular notion that the CIA is tapping everybody's phone is wrong; in 27 years, the agency placed only 32 taps on its own people.

He acknowledged that mail to and from the Soviet Union, China and

their allies was intercepted—"but it would have been read anyway (by the Communist governments)."

Even such American patriots as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin used intelligence methods—intercepting and reading mail of suspected traitors, Walters said.

He outlined how the intelligence community functions today.

"Intelligence is information concerning the ability, capability, forces and activities of foreign nations that have impact on the lives of Americans," Walters said.

The United States faces global military powers, like the Soviet Union, and world economic powers, such as the oil producers. Intelligence about these countries is essential for decision makers in Washington, he said.

Walters said 60 per cent of intelligence is collected through "open means"—using newspapers, broadcasts, information from U.S. embassies, travelers and other "public" sources.

Another 30 per cent is gathered through "technical" means. "This includes photography of all sorts—overhead and sideways—and electronics," Walters said.

He wouldn't amplify his description of "overhead and sideways" photography and "electronics" because he said most people would know what is implied.

The rest of intelligence material is obtained through "human intelligence," a euphemism for spying.

"This is the most effective. No electronics system will tell you what's in a man's head. The clandestine collection of intelligence makes up 5 to 6 per cent, but it gets 98.2 per cent of the publicity," Walters said.

He said publicity of the CIA's methods and targets and continued harassment of the CIA has given America's enemies in foreign countries the means to "blacken the name of the United States."